

Early Vancouver

Volume One

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

About the 2011 Edition

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



MR. AND MRS. JOHN LAWSON.

After our long conversation, Mr. Lawson invited me to his villa in a secluded nook of trees where the bend of Marine Drive meets the bend of shores, and here again were a number of holly trees, at 22nd and Bellevue Avenue.

Mrs. Lawson is a lady of splendid physique, behind whose gentle, gracious exterior the dominant personality of a mother of men of British Columbia was plainly discernible, one of those true types whose subtle encouragement has so contributed to the building of our homes where once forest grew; one of those who find expedients where others find difficulties; one of those women to whom British Columbia owes much. She welcomed us, and soon spread delicious refreshments.

They gave their only living son in the Great War; killed, near Cambrai, about a month before its end, whilst serving with the 46th Battalion—still another instance of the many only sons who fell in that awful conflict. Mr. Lawson himself joined the 158th Overseas Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own) in September 1916, arrived in England November 1916, served in France at the age of 57, another of those splendid men who, rightly or wrongly, found the expedient of serving our land in the moment of its greatest distress by declaring, despite the natural debarment of age, that they were still under forty-five years old. Subsequently, he was president of the West Vancouver branch of the Canadian Legion. He is the tyler of St. David's Lodge of A.F. & A.M.

There is a rapture in listening to the narrations of such men and women. Here was a man who had seen the first trains of the Canadian Pacific Railway pass, who had himself helped in the difficult task of getting them over a roadbed and route through the mountains as yet in its raw state of rough newness, a difficulty not perhaps familiar to those who have not experienced it, nor lived in that age; who had carved out of the virgin forest his garden on the shore, and who, as others came, and it quickly grew into a self-governing municipality, became a ruler in its civic government; finally, as he grew older, to serve as a soldier in the greatest of all adventures.

And here was a woman who, after years of playing the silent part of a resourceful pioneer wife, not one whit less important than a man's because of its unobtrusiveness, finally gives her only son, their posterity, for Canada.

"I went there to become a millionaire," said Mr. Lawson. And then he smiled.

JSM

WEST VANCOUVER. LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN W. WARDEN, D.S.O., O.B.E., 102ND BATTALION.

West Vancouver was incorporated as a municipality in 1912. The first reeve was Chas. Nelson, a pioneer druggist and cricketer of Vancouver, followed by Mr. Lawson as reeve for 1913 and 1914. It was during Mr. Lawson's term that Col. Warden was councillor.

13 OCTOBER 1931 - CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL. DEAN RENISON, D.D., M.A.

This evening attended meeting of Church Committee at which Dean Renison said that he had accepted, with much regret, the Bishopric of Athabasca.

He said he had gone east on his holidays without the faintest notion of what had since eventuated. At Hamilton he had been offered a rectory at one thousand dollars more than he was receiving here per year, but had refused it. He was coming home, when one quarter of an hour before he reached Winnipeg, a telegram was handed him saying that he had been elected, at the triennial synod of the Church of England in Canada then sitting in Winnipeg, and asking his immediate acceptance. He was met at the train by a delegation. He wired his wife in Hamilton, who advised acceptance as a call to duty. The remuneration as Bishop of Athabasca is one thousand dollars per annum less than Dean of Christ Church Cathedral. He said that he had been extremely happy in his charge at Christ Church Cathedral during the past four years, and had expected to remain here for an indefinite period. He realised the comfort he would probably have

to give up, but the north country required a man, God had seen fit to decree that he should go, and he accepted the duty.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.

Mr. A.E. Beck told me today that he was present at the committee meeting which arranged the details of the laying of the corner stone of Christ Church. Mr. William Downie (of the C.P.R.), afterwards Grand Master of the Freemasons, proposed that the freemasons should lay the cornerstone. Mr. Beck said, "I replied, 'why the freemasons? I don't know if there is any meaning to all the circling around and contortions they go through. The whole thing is as unintelligible to me as a lot of prairie Indians beating their tom toms and dancing around in a circle.' 'Well,' replied Mr. Downie," continued Mr. Beck, "when the freemasons circle around, Mr. Beck, each time they circle around they drop something in the cup.' 'Oh, I see,'" Mr. Beck said he replied. "then in that case I think we had better have them."

Mr. Beck had been relating the difficulties they had experienced in financing Christ Church at the commencement, the old "root house," the insistence of Mr. Browning that something be done about the property purchased from the C.P.R.—payment, I suppose—how Mr. Browning had said, "that it was a valuable corner," rather ominously, and how he, Mr. Beck, had replied that that might be so, but that, equally ominously, if Mr. Browning did not "look out," and "did anything"—presumably dispose of the property over their heads—there would be trouble as he would offend many influential people. Mr. Browning was C.P.R. land commissioner. He had told Mr. Browning that they would ultimately come out all right.

J.S. Matthews

14 OCTOBER 1931 - KITSILANO BEACH. WILD ANIMALS OF VANCOUVER.

In view of Mr. William Hunt's story about finding a deposit of elk dung under a tree just south of the Kitsilano "hotel site" at Kitsilano Beach, and Mr. Pittendrigh's story of finding elk horns, bleached, at Little Lake (now Deer Lake), and the similarity of the flora, etc. at both places—wet, swampy muskeg bordering water—one story confirms the other that these animals did exist around Vancouver at one time, and that they found a pleasing habitat, and perhaps food agreeable to them in and around such peaty places.

THE "JUNGLE" OF 1931. HASTINGS SAWMILL, SITE, 1931.

In conversation with Alderman Warner Loat today, I remarked to him that when the "Jungle" was broken up by the health authorities in September 1931, that the men who lived in it had drawn up a crude memorial in testimony of their appreciation of the benevolence of the Commissioners of the Vancouver Harbour Board; that it was written on a piece of foolscap paper, nicely phrased, and signed by a large number of men. He said in reply that some newspaper had published a disparaging report upon the character of these men, that one of them had complained to him of it, stating that the men of the "jungle" were not "roughs" nor "toughs," but a body of well-behaved earnest men who desired nothing more than to be good citizens, support themselves, and find work, but who were penniless and unable to find work. Colonel Williams told me that one man, at least, was university educated, and Cambridge at that.

J.S. Matthews, 1931

14 OCTOBER 1931 – WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE.

The story is told as happening at Gibson's Landing in the summer of 1931. Colonel Malkin, lately Mayor of Vancouver, and recently appointed Honourable Lieutenant Colonel of the British Columbia Regiment, but who had never previously worn a uniform, was summering at "Gibson's," and was down on the wharf to meet the boat. He is a very mannerly man, precise, reserved.